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13 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Initial Comments on The Limits of Power,
By Senator Eugene J. McCarthy

1. Senator McCarthy's The Limits of Power (Holt, Rhinehart and Winston) includes treatment of CIA which is the sum of carefully selected derogatory comments published by intellectuals (with special emphasis on Schlesinger) and McCarthy's own strong views on need for Congressional supervision of the Agency. His thesis is that CIA has taken on a role "far beyond the one it was intended to perform" and is "doing the wrong things for the right reasons". He sums up CIA's first 20 years as proof of need for continuous Congressional overlook.

2. The book which is based on information available through June 1967 devotes one of its ten chapters to CIA (the fourth, entitled "Power Through Pawns"--pages 77-111). The major thrust of this chapter is to call into question the "other functions and duties" of CIA. In addition to the twenty-four pages on the Agency in this chapter the author mentions us only in passing in the second chapter where he states that CIA under Allan Dulles "became a major force for formulating and executing foreign policy" and that "independent of Congress, not limited by our treaty obligations, it enmeshed itself in politics..." (pages 22, 23). "The CIA has not been well directed", he notes later (page 27).

3. The author attempts to show "the dangers in an operation like that of the Central Intelligence Agency and in the extension of its powers". He raises three basic questions with regard to the Agency:

1. "What does the CIA do?"
2. "Does it do these things well or badly?"
3. "Are its actions properly authorized and controlled?"

In attempting to answer the first two questions, Senator McCarthy at no point really comes to a value judgment. He mentions the "successful" intelligence gathering U-2 operations but then questions the failure to

SECRET

SECRET

explain the need for the May 1960 flight. Using this failure, he expounds the thesis, quoting from Kafka's The Burrow, "that in reality the burrow does provide a considerable degree of security, but by no means enough, for is one ever free from anxieties inside it?" This he ties in with a previous reference to C. S. Lewis' The Inner Ring: "Of all passions the passion for the Inner Ring is most skillful in making a man who is not yet a very bad man do very bad things". In discussing the Bay of Pigs invasion he continues this thought by quoting Schlesinger to the effect that "President Kennedy saw the Cuban project as a contingency plan without realizing how contingency planning generates itself on momentum and creates its own reality". The author then follows up with a quote from Sorenson-- " 'I stood there at Ike's desk' (Dulles told President Kennedy) 'and told him I was certain our Guatemalan operation would succeed, and Mr. President, the prospects for this plan are even better than they were for that one' ". The author then proceeds to show that Allan Dulles forced President Kennedy's hand by arguing that to scatter the brigade would be more serious than to continue with the plan to invade. The author quotes Schlesinger as saying "contingency had thus become a reality".

4. In building his thesis of the dangers inherent in a CIA free from meaningful Congressional supervision, the author accepts as fact that we blundered in not anticipating the Chinese Communist entry into the Korean War, and states that "CIA appears to have misread everything" in the Bay of Pigs case. He then takes the reader through a listing of already published Agency involvements. He cites our support to the Chinese Nationalists in Northern Burma, implying by quoting from Unna's 1958 Harper's article that the U.S. Ambassador was initially unaware of this activity. He notes what he understands was a divergence from State Department policy in Laos using quotes from Hillman to the effect that "the CIA station chief refused to follow the State Department policy or even tell his plans and intentions". The author continues this theme by mentioning the Singapore case: flap of 1960; the "bribing attempt revealed in 1965"; and the letter of apology from Secretary of State Rusk to Lee Kuan Yew. The Mossadegh ouster in 1953, the overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954, and our support to the 1958 rebellion in Indonesia are also mentioned. Sources used are Sorenson (Kennedy), Schlesinger (A Thousand Days), the New York Times 1966 series, Hillman (To Move A Nation), and Eisenhower (Mandate For Change) and Truman among others.

5. More timely material used in this chapter includes the Ramparts April 1966 expose of the Michigan State University project and the 1967 NSA imbroglio. In the latter coverage the Senator also mentions our support

SECRET

SECRET

to the American Newspaper Guild.

6. Senator McCarthy traces attempts to place Congress (actually the Senate) in a more formal position to supervise Agency operations. The author cites two instances when specific legislation was introduced: The 1956 proposal of Senator Mansfield for the establishment of a Joint Committee on Central Intelligence and the July 1966 resolution by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee calling for the creation of a nine-member committee on intelligence operations. The author also notes that, in killing the last attempt (1966), the implication was left that Senators, particularly those on the Foreign Relations Committee, are not to be trusted with security information. He states that he has not been able to determine the extent of present Congressional insight into Agency operations. Using the "advise and consent" concept, he ends up with a reluctant acceptance of the inevitable when he describes the recent invitation of three Senate Foreign Affairs Committee observers to participate in the present "watchdog" process.

7. Conclusions.

a. A quick reading of this book uncovers no new exposure of Agency operations.

b. The author does not use sources identified in the public mind as "anti-Agency".

c. The book is not an attack on the Agency, but neither is it cast as friendly criticism. The author presses his well-known contention that CIA should be more closely supervised by the Congress. He does not accuse the Agency of acting without executive policy approval but repeatedly makes the point that "with this development (doing the wrong things for the right reasons), may also come the temptation of other agencies to escape responsibility and accountability by transferring more and more to the special agency that has immunity."

d. The author does not agree that the Agency is an invisible government and agrees with Schlesinger that CIA often takes a more liberal line than State. But the author then quotes Schlesinger to the effect that "none the less it had acquired a power which, however beneficial its exercise might often be, blocked State Department control of foreign affairs."

SECRET

SECRET

e. Although the author makes liberal use of President Truman's Washington Post article of 1963 and quotes Truman as stating "I therefore would like to see the CIA... restored to its original assignment as the intelligence arm of the President... and its operational duties terminated....", McCarthy does not push for the separation of the collectional and action responsibilities.

f. Probably most damaging, in the broad, is McCarthy's unemotional, succinct writing, which carries with it an air of authority. But it is significant that not even the publishers found anything of interest about CIA to quote in the blurb on the dust-jacket.

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